

The Honolulu Engineer District designed and built the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. HED's dedication to the on-going care and maintenance of this national shrine allows those interred here to

**Story and photos by
Michelle Cain**

For more than 50 years the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific has been the final resting place for tens of thousands of Americans who gave their lives for their country. Designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the cemetery and the Honolulu

Memorial are located in Puowaina Crater, an extinct volcano referred to as Punchbowl because of its unique shape.

Roughly translated, Puowaina means "consecrated hill" or "hill of sacrifice." During World War II this natural wonder, offering a view from Diamond Head to Pearl Harbor, became the home of one of nine permanent coastal batteries on Oahu. Although the many tunnels of Gun Battery Number 304 still remain, it is now a place of peace.

From the announcement in September 1948 of the opening of bids for the first phase of construction at Punchbowl, the Honolulu Engineer District played a vital role in the construction of this national shrine.

"The Corps was there at the beginning and through the years has continued the front-line construction support," said Fred Nakahara, HED's program support manager for the Department of Veterans Affairs/American Battle Monuments Commission projects.

The first interment, an unknown victim of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was made on January 4,

1949. Burials were carried out daily while Army Engineers continued their construction work. As taps were played, all construction ceased as the workmen stood reverently at attention during each of the ceremonies.

The burial of Ernie Pyle, a well-known war correspondent killed during the invasion of Okinawa, marked the opening of the cemetery to the public on July 19, 1949. There are now 33,230 gravesites at Punchbowl representing fallen warriors from World War II battles at Guadalcanal, Guam, China, Burma, Saipan, Okinawa and Iwo Jima, and prisoner of war camps in Japan. The cemetery also holds the remains of 848 U.S. servicemen who died fighting in Korea.

The Honolulu Memorial, honoring the achievements and sacrifices of Americans in the Pacific during World War II and the Korean War, was dedicated on May 1, 1966. It was enlarged in 1980 to include those missing from the war in Vietnam.

Overlooking the graves area of the cemetery, the memorial includes a chapel, two map galleries, and a 70-step staircase leading from the crater floor to the Court of Honor. Flanking the massive staircase are 10 Courts of the Missing, where the names of 28,778 war heroes missing in action or lost at sea are recorded. A 30-foot female figure known as Columbia graces the front tower of the memorial, under which are en-



The map galleries in the Honolulu Memorial are a favorite stop for millions of visitors each year. The area has been restored and preserved by HED.

Rest in Peace

See "Punchbowl," page 12

Did you want us to respect your cause? You just damned your cause. Did you want to make us fear? You just steeled our resolve. Did you want to tear us apart? You just brought us together. —Leonard Pitts, Jr., the Miami Herald, referring to the September 11 terrorist attacks

Aloha means hello to Jeff Cochran, Occupational and Safety Manager, who comes to HED from the Little Rock District. **Aloha means hello** to Jenelle Wong, Design Branch, Architectural Specifications Section, who is a participant in the Student Educational and Employment Program (STEP). **Aloha**



means hello to Dr. Molly Kihara, Environmental Technical Branch's water quality and regional dredging expert, who comes to HED from a position in the private sector. **Aloha means hello** to Andrew Kohashi, Chief, Army-Hawaii Branch of PPMD, who comes to HED from the Japan Engineer District.

Punchbowl

Continued from page 6

graved the words of sympathy expressed by President Lincoln to the mother of five sons killed in battle: "...The solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Under an interservice agreement between agencies, HED's support has continued over the years in the form of various repair and maintenance projects throughout the cemetery.

When work needed to be done, "the Corps of Engineers came to my aid in a heartbeat," said Gene Castagnetti, cemetery director. "We began a partnership to preserve this national shrine. They've worked diligently to restore the memorial."

Completed projects include the repair and improvement of roads within Punchbowl, and the installation of irrigation and valve control systems. Restrooms at the Honolulu Memorial have been renovated to conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The interior and exterior surfaces of the memorial have been cleaned and sealed, metal handrails have been restored and preserved, and the grand staircase has been cleaned and sealed. Repair and restoration work has also been done on the reflecting pool and pumping system.

"The Army Corps of Engineers does a great job because they're responsive," said Castagnetti. "Our customers are all veterans; there's a military family connection."

Future projects to be completed by HED include the cleaning and sealing of the Courts of the Missing, repair or replacement of the upper and lower plazas, and the procurement of tents/sunshades and chairs to accommodate the nearly 100 ceremonies conducted each year at the cemetery.

"We want to continue the very good partnership we have with the Army Corps of Engineers," said Castagnetti. "They take on jobs up here which really are small compared to some of the massive million dollar jobs that they have. We're comfortable with them. We're confident with them. They do a professional job."

The jobs that the Honolulu Engineer District takes on at Punchbowl may be relatively small, but HED's efforts have a wide impact. The National Cemetery of the Pacific has become an international symbol of selfless sacrifice, accommodating visitors from all over the world, said Castagnetti. More than 5.5 million visitors come to these hallowed grounds annually to pay their respects.

"Every job is important, no matter the size. It's always a pleasure to do work for them," said Nakahara. "Many of the contractors feel it's a small way of paying their respects to America's veterans as they maintain the facilities."

Historical HED: A step back in time

One year ago...

Flooding on the Big Island in November tested several of HED's flood control projects, which performed as designed and prevented estimated losses as high as \$17 million.

Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers became the 50th Chief of Engineers in a ceremony October 23 at Fort Myer, Va.

Five years ago...

POD's computer network infrastructure is upgraded, allowing for the full implementation of CEFMS.

Construction of the \$20 million Advanced Electro-Optical System (AEOS) telescope at the U.S. Air Force Space Surveillance Complex on Maui nears comple-

tion, with the installation of its uniquely retracting dome.

Ten years ago...

Work continues to progress on the expansion of the Hale Koa Hotel at Fort DeRussy. Total project cost is estimated at \$100 million.

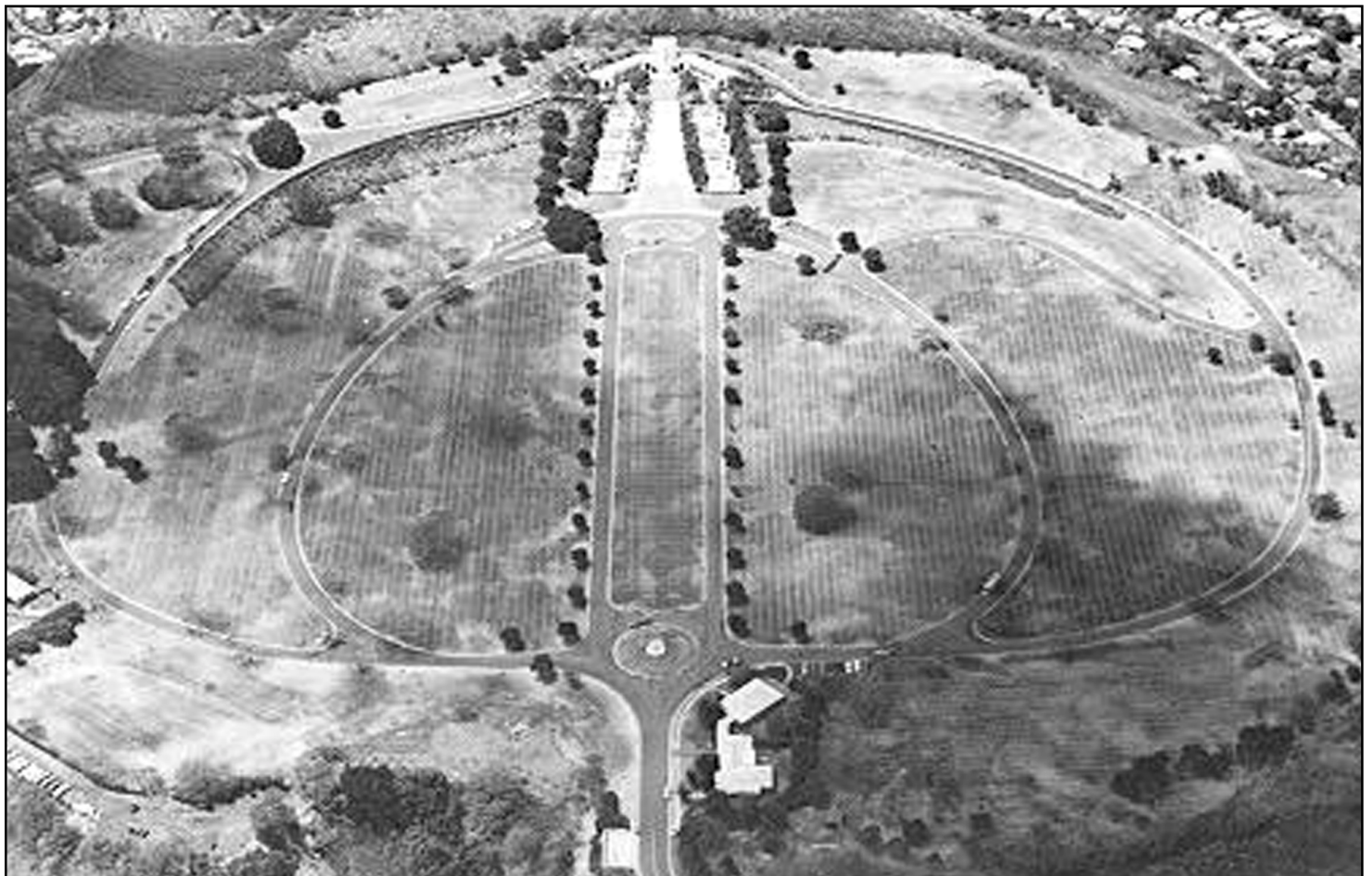
The Sand Island State Park shore protection project was dedicated October 30. The project was a joint effort of the Corps of Engineers, the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, and Hawaii citizens.

POD and HED surpassed the Combined Federal Campaign dollar goal, with contributions of more than \$52,300.

We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm. —George Orwell



Annually, more than 5.5 million visitors pay their respects to the thousands of servicemembers interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Every day, family members can be found placing flowers or flags at the gravesites, and performing simple beautification tasks in honor of their loved ones.



An aerial view of the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific gives a better understanding of how it came to be referred to as the Punchbowl. The Honolulu Memorial is at the top center. The magnificent staircase leads up to it from the center floor of the crater, where the 13,900 World War II veterans are buried. On either side are the Courts of the Missing. The upper left side of the crater offers what is arguably the most beautiful view on the island, from Diamond Head to Pearl Harbor. —U.S. Army photo

We seek not the world-wide victory of one nation or system but a world-wide victory of man. The modern globe is too small, its weapons too destructive, and its disorders too contagious to permit any other kind of victory. —Former president John F. Kennedy